Cherry Cordial

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Cherry Cordial

by sourweather

Summary

The Brothers Graham go on a double date with two Lithuanian twins for Valentine's Day. Both of them end up being more interested in the other brother's date.

Notes

You pick up the Cherry Cordial from your Chocolate Sampler and pop it into your mouth. The chocolate shell breaks beneath your teeth with a gentle snap, and you bite through a soft, juicy cherry. It's sweet, bright and just the slightest bit tart.

See the end of the work for more notes

Tonight wasn't going the way Adam had expected.

He'd been prepared to have a mediocre evening at best, when his brother presented the idea. A friend of his, some scientist Will knew from work, had offered to set the brothers up for Valentine's Day with another set of siblings. Twins.

Adam wasn't interested. He was perfectly content with spending the holiday just as he always did: watching a bad movie and eating discounted chocolate samplers with Will on the 15th. But Will persuaded him, as he often did.

'If they're insufferable,' he'd said with a smirk, 'We can make fun of them together after.'

That'd warmed him up to the idea, a little. Took some of the pressure off. A blind date was a terrifying concept, but Adam knew he wouldn't be alone. Will would be with him.

It wasn't difficult for Will and Adam to choose which twin they would each be paired off with. Hannibal Lecter, from Beverly's descriptions, was much more suited to Adam. Dignified, charming, pleasant. Not to mention that Will nearly gagged when Beverly told him that Hannibal was a psychiatrist.

Even knowing that he would be sitting with Hannibal at dinner, though, Adam was nervous about the… *other* Lecter twin. Even the qualities that Beverly listed to make him sound appealing made Adam dread being near him for an evening.

So it was decided. Adam would try and get to know Hannibal, while Will enjoyed his evening with Nigel.

Adam was regretting that decision, now.

"So," he said, trying once again to start a conversation that didn't fizzle out after five minutes. "You're a psychiatrist."

Hannibal nodded, spearing another bite of meat with his fork. Luckily no one had sneered at Adam's order, which he'd been nervous about all day.

"That sounds… complicated. What do you like about it?"

It made Hannibal smile, and Adam allowed himself a sigh of relief. He considered his answer for a beat, chewing thoughtfully, then said "I suppose my favorite part is the liberation it affords."

Adam twisted his hands in his lap, awkwardly tugging at his thumb. "I don't understand," he replied for the fifth time. Adam wasn't stupid, he knew that, but Hannibal spoke with so many strange phrases. It made him nearly incomprehensible to Adam, and having to repeatedly ask the man to clarify his statements made him feel embarrassed and frustrated.

"Most of my patients are held prisoner by their own minds," Hannibal explained, and Adam wrinkled his nose. More words that didn't make sense. To make matters worse, he glanced at

Hannibal's twin, and found the man smirking at him. It made him burn with self-consciousness. He wanted to leave. "Slaves to their habits, their behaviors, their thoughts. Through my work, I'm able to offer them freedom. There's nothing that beings me more satisfaction than seeing someone unleash their true self."

Adam opened his mouth, on the verge of asking Will to take him home, when Will chuckled.

Hannibal gave him an odd look. "Something amusing, Will?"

Will shook his head, taking a large sip of his wine. "No," he said, but he was smirking. "No, I'm sorry. That's just… utter horseshit." He laughed again, a little rougher. "I'm curious, Doctor: Do you hear yourself, when you talk?"

Nigel barked out a laugh, so forceful that it made him slap the table. Adam's eyes went wide. He tried to lower himself in his chair, braced for a disaster. Surely, Hannibal was about to cause a scene. To demand that both brothers leave and never speak to him again.

He came to the conclusion that he would never understand Hannibal Lecter a moment later, when the man looked Will up and down and grinned.

The rest of their dinner was… uncomfortable, for Adam. While the beginning of the date had been far too filled with awkward silence, Adam now found himself trapped in the other extreme.

From the moment Will insulted him, Hannibal's attention was entirely on Will. Which was fine, Adam was tired of trying to talk with Hannibal. But Will was so absorbed in his conversation with the doctor that it was impossible to get a single word in. Adam still didn't understand it, but what had initially seemed like a heated argument was now clearly… something *else.* The two of them danced back and forth between different topics, stringing together dense metaphors until it gave Adam a headache. Eventually, he gave up on listening at all.

He sat there, his cheek propped on one hand, watching the ice cubes melting in his glass, for what felt like hours. His fingers began to drum on the tabletop, impatient and devoid of rhythm.

Adam looked up, eyes landing on the man seated diagonal from him. Nigel was leaned back in his seat, staring out a far window at the street beyond. He looked every bit as bored as Adam was. Adam felt tempted to say something to him, but he didn't want to interrupt Will when he was so engrossed. Maybe if they could just switch seats?

"Well," Nigel said, abruptly pushing back his chair. Both Will and Hannibal startled from their trance, and Adam saw his brother look around the restaurant as if he'd completely forgotten he was there. "I think I'm gonna step out and have a smoke."

And then, to his surprise, Nigel looked to Adam. "You wanna tag along?"

Will seemed to notice the empty plates on the table for the first time. Adam saw his brother's face turn pink. "We can call it a night, if you want," he offered, and gave Adam an

embarrassed look. “I didn’t realize—“

“I’ll go with you,” Adam blurted. All four men were surprised by the interruption, Adam himself included, but he forced himself to stand. He looked down at Will and smiled. “You can keep talking, it’s okay.”

Will narrowed his eyes. He glanced at Nigel, then back at Adam. “You sure?” he asked. Adam nodded, and Will shrugged his shoulders. “Alright. Coffee, Doctor?”

Adam might not be good at reading people, but it hadn’t escaped his notice that Hannibal’s eyes had barely left Will all evening. So he wasn’t surprised when the man said “I’d like that.”

He followed Nigel out onto the sidewalk, shivering a little at the February air. Nigel pulled a pack of cigarettes from his coat pocket and placed one between his lips. Adam couldn’t stop himself from watching him take a long, slow drag before blowing smoke to the sky.

Nigel was very attractive. Both of the twins were, in Adam’s opinion. So Nigel made a nice thing to look at, standing there with his black suit hugging his broad, tall body. Still, he tried to keep himself from staring.

“You’ve been quiet tonight,” Nigel noted, tapping ash onto the pavement.

Adam shrugged. “I don’t really like to socialize. I’m just here because Will asked me to come.”

Nigel nodded. “Something off-putting about the human race?”

“It’s not that. I’m just not very good with people.”

He couldn’t stop the way his face turned hot when Nigel looked at him, a slow sweep from head to toe. “Prove it,” he said.

Adam frowned. “What?”

A crooked grin appeared on Nigel’s face. “I don’t believe that you’re bad with people,” he clarified. “Show me.”

The absurdity of it made him laugh, and he folded his arms against the chill. “Your brother definitely didn’t find me interesting,” he noted.

Nigel snorted. “Darling, not being Han’s type is a fucking compliment.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

The other man hesitated for a moment, brought the cigarette back to his mouth. “Nothing,” he replied. “Anyway, I’d rather talk about you. Tell me about yourself, gorgeous. What are you into?”

The flush on his face only grew deeper. He'd never been called 'gorgeous' before. He shifted his weight a little, his heart thrumming with nerves. "I wouldn't want to bore you."

At that, Nigel leaned closer. Adam grimaced at the scent of his cigarette, but his nearness took the edge off of the cold. He wanted to lean in, too. To curl close to Nigel's side and hide from the elements. "Darling," Nigel purred, and no, tonight is *certainly* not going how Adam imagined. "I may not know your brother, but I do know Han. And I'll tell you, *that—"* He gestured to the window behind them. "— is gonna go on until one of us fucking drags Will away from him. I've got all the time in the world."

Adam smiled. Biting his lip, he looked up and down the street. It was quiet, mostly empty. He nodded toward the end of the sidewalk, beckoning the other man. "Do you want to go for a walk, Nigel?"

It made Adam feel strangely giddy, when Nigel took him by the arm. He linked their arms together, standing easily at his side with an answering grin. "Lead the way, beautiful."

End Notes

Thanks to: Kelly and BookishWolf for suggesting the ingredients for this chocolate!

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